



Principal's tie to ADOT explained

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Does he or doesn't he?

Yes and no, as it turns out.

The profession of Kyrene de los Lagos Elementary School Principal Tonya Yalung's husband came into question recently after district officials misunderstood the reason why she could not serve on the new citizens advisory team for the proposed South Mountain Freeway.

District spokeswoman Jennifer Grentz mistakenly said last Thursday that Yalung's husband works for the Arizona Department of Transportation, which would build the 10-lane, 22-mile freeway if approved by federal and local officials.

Yalung's role on the committee would present a conflict of interest, Grentz explained at the time

Grentz repeated the information Tuesday but said there was another reason why Yalung would not serve: The district's governing board wants a district liaison to report back on freeway plans because six other Kyrene schools sit within a few miles of the proposed \$1.7 billion freeway along Pecos Road.

The freeway, if built, would back up to the playground of Kyrene de los Lagos at Pecos Road and 34th Way. That's one reason why the school's former principal, Jim Stroger, once served on a freeway committee.

The freeway would affect several other schools in the area.

Yalung, who did not immediately answer an e-mail or return phone calls seeking comment, sent a note late Tuesday stating, "To clarify your question, my husband does not work for ADOT."

When questioned about the conflicting information, Grentz said she had misunderstood Yalung's husband's job.

"He's a contractor. He has a company that sends information to ADOT," said Grentz, adding that there was a miscommunication.

Yalung did not answer a follow-up question seeking information about her husband's company and exact relationship with ADOT.